



Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

By: Robin Wininger, Regional Education Coordinator for Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center

Have you or anyone you know had a head impact that “rang your bell”? If so, you may have had a concussion. Concussion or mild Traumatic Brain Injury is the most common form of Traumatic Brain Injury. Symptoms of most concussions resolve on their own within days or weeks.

A traumatic brain injury is a blow or jolt to the head that disrupts the normal function of the brain. TBI severity is determined at the time of the injury and may be classified as: mild, moderate, severe, or penetrating. An injury or impact that involves an alteration or loss of consciousness with an onset of symptoms within the first 24-48 hours is what defines a significant concussion or mTBI. Symptoms that can occur after a TBI can be physical, cognitive and/or emotional.

Physical symptoms include headaches, sleep disturbances, dizziness, balance problems, nausea/vomiting, visual disturbances, light sensitivity, ringing in the ears and fatigue.

Cognitive symptoms include slowed thinking, poor concentration, memory problems and difficulty finding words.

Emotional symptoms include anxiety, depression, irritability and mood swings.

Each of these TBI symptoms can also be associated with other illnesses, conditions or events, especially if symptoms don't appear directly after the injury. It is important to be checked out by a provider if there is an injury event followed by a loss or alteration of consciousness. If you are deployed when it happens, a medic can help. This can help you get the appropriate evaluation, education, and rest for optimal healing.

Service members have several places to go for evaluation and information about concussion here at Fort Carson, including the Soldier Readiness Processing Center/Medical Readiness Center, your Primary Care Manager or through monthly classes offered by the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center.

Specialized treatment for ongoing symptoms related to concussion or TBI are offered on Fort Carson at the Warrior Recovery Center. The WRC is a model clinic in the Army for evaluation and treatment of patients with ongoing symptoms related to mTBI. Treatment is individualized according to the needs of patients and may include specialists such as a neurologist, physician assistant, social worker, neuropsychologist, speech therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy. Each of the providers has specialized training, skills and equipment for treatment of persistent TBI symptoms.

The length of treatment varies from a couple of visits to several months. It depends on the needs of the patient. Treatment is available to adult active duty Service members



members and Families. Retirees may be seen on a space available basis. All patients are seen by referral only, which can be made by providers at the SRP, MRC or PCMs at any of the primary clinics on post.

Knowledge and awareness are important for recognition and patient participation in treatment of concussion. Fort Carson has many opportunities for you to find out more about these types of injuries.. "Back to Basic" TBI classes are monthly on Wednesdays at the SRC, WRC and SFAC. "Beyond the Basic " TBI class is offered monthly on Thursdays. A new class "TBI Overview" is held every Wednesday at the WRC from 8 to 8:30 a.m. and 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. for Service members and Family members.

In March, more information will be available every Friday at the Fort Carson PX from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Stop by and register to win a brain bicycle/skateboarding helmet and learn more about concussions and the resources available.

For more information please contact:

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Resources:

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center www.dvbic.org

Brainline www.brainline.org or Military Brainline www.militarybrainline.org